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Due to diverse reasons, BILK 22 (May 1988) will appear a bit later than usual.

I have heard the mermaids singing. each to each.
I do not think they will sing for me.
I have seen them riding seaward on the waves.
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.
(T.S.Eliot: The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock)

BEHEMOTH:

● Loch Ness: The Loch Ness fish farm (salmon cages) were discussed in The Times (TT), 6. Aug 87, p.5ab, the sonar expedition was briefly mentioned in TT, 31. Dec 87, p.11f. Nessletter 85 (Dec 87) had two interesting and sad news: 1. Tim Dinsdale, Nessie pioneer, has died, 2. the famous "head" picture, taken by the Rines team in 1975, has been positively identified as an object on the lake bottom! Andreas Trottmann, one of my readers, has sent me two Nessie sightings he collected himself at the loch. He talked with both witnesses in May 1984.

On Nov 24, 1982, a young farmer and hunter from Fort Augustus was on the A 82 at Cobb Cairn. It was 4.45 pm. The witness was in his car when he noticed, in a distance of some 225 m, a headneck some 2.4 - 2.7 m high. The head had the size of a sheep's!, with no features visible. The witness stopped his car, slammed the door and ran down to the shore. When he came there the thing had vanished. The witness drew a sketch, his headneck resembled the second Shields photo. The loch was calm, with little waves.

The second sighting was early in the 1980s, by a woman whom Trottmann describes as shy. She saw two humps, about 10 am, near the Cobb Cairn. The lake was calm. I've made the experience that many local people begin to tell stories about their sightings when you ask them, but become very shy as soon as you take your notebook and ask for names and details.

● China: On February 17, the Chinese year of the dragon began. (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12.1., p.7d & 19.2., p.9; Rhein Zeitung, 2.1., p.4cd; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 15.2., p.9cde & 17.2.; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 17.2.; TT, 17.2., p.22de) China im Aufbau, the German version of China Reconstructs, in the Feb 1988 number, has an article by Wei Tang about dragons in Chinese folklore. Most tales are of dragon models or completely mythical dragons, but one note is interesting: some time before Liu Xiu (25 - 56 AD) took over the throne, "a yellow dragon was observed in the river". One final note from China: I mentioned the large salmon from Lake Hanas several times in BILK. I've found a newspaper story about tourism in China in the Rheinpfalz, July 22, 1986, which states that China was about to convert the lakes in its Yunnan province into tourist resorts - and that was exactly where the monsters were discovered. Any connections?

● New Zealand: According to an article by Michel Raynal, in BBC Wildlife, Jan 1988, p.12, a new species of giant gecko (giant, that is 62 cm/2 ft) was discovered in the files of the Natural History Museum in Paris. Some Maori legends of giant lizards could probably be based on these creatures - another reminder that Cryptozoology is both: the science of mythical animals, and of probably undiscovered ones. There is not too much evidence for real animals among all these monsters, yet some are discovered from time to time.

● Odds and Ends: Fortean Tomes have now published Michel Meurger's important book on "Lake Monster Traditions". Get your copy for only £ 11.95 from Fortean Tomes, 1 Shoebury Road, East Ham, London E62AQ. Der Spiegel, the German news magazine, in an article on the extinction of the dinosaurs, mentions Hagenbeck's Cameroon expeditions in search of living dinos (28. Dec 87, p.124a). Notes on the Storsjö monster

and the Tianchi dragon in Pursuit 78, p.90 & 91. The Washington/USA lake monster that turned out to be a sturgeon is mentioned in Tauchen, March 1988, p.10. Same number also has an article by myself (on pp.52 - 54) on European lake monster, starting where my article in Fortean Times ended.

ISIS:

- California: Another aquatic Bigfoot? Three loggers saw a 10ft "hairy animal walking on its hind legs" in April 1986, at the California/Nevada border. It disappeared towards Prosser lake. (Pursuit 78, p.57)
- François de Sarre, who advocates the idea that all primates, if not all animals, evolved from a "homunculus", a kind of water dwelling early hominid, outlined his theory in "Le Clin d'Oeil" (No. 18, Aug 87, published in Nice) Monsieur de Sarre would like to hear from any BILK readers with comments, useful material, etc. His address is: BP 65, 06022 Nice cedex, France. I have my reservations about this theory, but I think we should all be open minded and help each other as much as possible.
- In Dec 87, Sebastian Münster, one of the most important German Renaissance scientist, would have been 500 years old. His writings include descriptions of unicorns and mermaids, as the Rheinpfalz tells us in an article (11. Dec 87).

LEVIATHAN:

- Thai fishermen have caught a curious big shark, according to the Arab News (14. Feb, p.12d): it is 6.2m long, measuring 3m around the belly, and weighing 1000 kilos. Thai fisherman caught it in Southern Thai waters, while they were netting with a trawler, off Suvat Thani province's Pah-Luey Island, on Feb 12. 50 men using a crane dragged it ashore. It was a "frog-head shark".
- An article, by myself, on a giant marine turtle in the North Atlantic Ocean, see Pursuit 78, p.55.

USO:

- Sweden: On "Russian subs" in Swedish waters in general, International Herald Tribune, 21. Dec, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11. Jan, p.6ab). TT, 19. Dec, p.6b: General Bengt Gustafsson, Commander-in-chief of the Swedish armed forces, published a report on territory violations by "alien subs" last summer: there was "no definite proof" of the identity of the subs, but indications are that they were Soviet. More than 30 cases of unidentified subs in Sweden in the summer of 87 and fruitless searches: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 9. Jan, p.7c)
- Australia: After a close encounter of the 2nd kind in the Australien desert, a UFO was observed off Ceduna in South Australia over the sea (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 23. Jan, p.15e). A ghostship that was regularly seen off the Great Barrier Reef in Australia is described in Tauchen, July 1987. (For another ghostship from that area, see BILK 1)

MARINE LIFE:

- Whales: Rajiv Gandhi rescues stranded whale at Bangaram Islet in Indian Ocean on Dec 30 (Saudi Gazette/SG, 31. Dec, p.5). Dolphins save yachtsmen capsized off East London, SA, and bring them save to shore (TT, 9. Jan). On 14. Dec, 13m female whale stranded alive in Fisher's Bay, Mass. On Dec 15, 4 further whales stranded in Mass, 3 of them humpbacks, only 1 dead. In Nov, 4 dead whales stranded in Mass. (SG, 17. Dec p.4bc)
 - Attacks: shark attack off Durban, SA (Rheinpfalz, 17. Feb). Killer croc in Tana River, near Malindi, Kenya, attacks pregnant woman (Rheinpfalz, 28. Jan; SG, 28. Jan, p.4g, Arab News, 28. Jan, p.12e).
 - Coelacanth filmed by German expedition: Science & Vie, 12/1987, p.68-70, ZDF, 7. Feb.
 - Out-of-place: rain of pink frogs on Cirencester, UK, last summer: TT, 8. Feb, p.5ab. Polarbear killed at Haganesvik, Iceland (last one arrived on ice in 1976): Rheinpfalz, 18. Feb.
 - Turtles: turtle discovered in Dongkou district, Province Hunan, in China: 500 gr, 35 cm long, with head and 15 cm tail like snake! (China im Bild, Jan 88, p.16) A turtle with two heads was born in Germany (Rheinpfalz, 11. Feb)
 - Dinos: dinosaur tracks, popularily identified as elephant tracks by locals, protected in Turkmenistan, USSR (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12. Jan, p.5b)
- Tanks to M. Raynal, F. de Sarre, A. Trottmann and my sister Regina.